DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Catholic Life and Mission Policy



Reviewed on:	September 2026
Next Review:	September 2028

St Michael's Catholic Primary School
Catholic Life and Mission Policy

Catholic Life and Mission

'When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, the answer is the same in all three of the Gospels in which the question is asked: to love God with all your mind, heart, soul and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself. This call to love is at the heart of the educational mission of every Catholic school. It is a mission that is clearly echoed in the Second Vatican Council which teaches that the purpose of an education that is distinctively Christian is threefold (*Gravissimum Educationis* 2). Its first purpose is to ensure that all pupils understand the faith that gives the school its identity as a Catholic school. The second, is to ensure that all are invited to learn how to worship God in spirit and truth through the prayer and liturgy of the Church. The third, is the formation of all to live in conformity with the pattern of human goodness, truth and justice that we find in Jesus Christ.' [1]

This threefold mission is reflected in the three perspectives of the Catholic School Inspection process. Through religious education pupils are invited to love God with all their mind, through collective worship with all their heart, soul and strength and through the Catholic life and mission of the school to love their neighbour as themselves.
This policy on Catholic life and mission complements the Religious Education policy, the Prayer and Liturgy policy and the Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy.
The aim of this policy is to show how faithfully St Michael's responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Mission Statement

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10

The mission statement of St Michael's is highly visible throughout the school environment. It clearly reflects the school's role in the educational mission of the Church, promoting Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
Our mission statement is a touch stone of school life so that:

- Pupils have a clear understanding of its meaning and can articulate this at an age appropriate level
- All staff embrace and implement the statement across daily school life through a range of opportunities. This is reflected in daily class prayers, where pupils are encouraged to give thanks, reflect on their experiences, and consider how they can live positively and compassionately. Whole-school liturgical prayers and assemblies celebrate the Church's seasons and help pupils understand how Jesus' message of fullness of life is relevant to their own lives.
- The mission statement is made visible through displays around the school, which celebrate pupils' achievements, promote well-being, and highlight Gospel values such as love, respect and forgiveness.
- Staff model the mission in their relationships with pupils, ensuring that every child feels valued, supported and encouraged to reach their full potential academically, socially and spiritually.
- A range of enrichment opportunities, including charitable fundraising, pupil leadership roles, extra-curricular activities and community involvement, further support pupils in living out

[1] CSI Inspection Handbook

the mission. Through these experiences, children are empowered to grow in confidence, develop their God-given talents and understand what it means to live life to the full as members of a caring, faith-filled community.

- It is shared with parents and the wider community. It is prominently displayed through school signage and reflected across the school environment. The mission is regularly reinforced through school newsletters, email footers and key school policy documents, ensuring it remains central to communication with families.
- The school website provides further opportunities to share and celebrate the mission, outlining how it underpins school life and guides decision-making.

- Parents' meetings and wider community gatherings offer opportunities to revisit the mission statement and explore how it is lived out in practice, helping to strengthen the shared partnership between home, school and parish in supporting pupils to live life to the full.

School Environment

Visitors to St Michael's are aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school through the physical environment, the presence of images and symbols and the recognition of a learning environment that respects the human dignity of all persons as made in God's image and likeness. At St Michael's every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment:

- All rooms have a crucifix
- All rooms have a cared for, attractive prayer area
- All rooms have 'Let us Pray 2Gether' resources
- Each class has a 'liturgy' box with coloured cloths and good quality religious artefacts
- There are displays in the corridors with reflection on our Mission Statement, information relating to the current liturgical season
- Focal points for liturgical prayers reflect the theme and season
- Displays in the hall document the activities of the School Council, the Fairtrade committee, the environmental group, our work with the local community
- Displays within each classroom reflect the 'The Way' topic being taught, the liturgical season, work produced by the pupils, key prayers and scripture
- There are child-friendly quotes from scripture around the corridors
- The school grounds have a peaceful prayer garden, and eco-friendly area, a school allotment

Catholic Curriculum

'The Catholic vision of education is distinctive and the beliefs it holds, the values and aspirations it has must inspire the whole of the curriculum.'[2]

Our school is a community of learning with a distinctive educational philosophy which is based on the Gospels. Whilst Religious Education is at the core of the core curriculum, this philosophy permeates all our curriculum and activities as we recognise the needs of each individual member of the community.

At an age-appropriate level, children are introduced to the nine principles of Catholic Social Teaching, using the CAFOD resources. We use child friendly resources to explore the writings of Pope Francis, such as Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti. In this way we are building their moral compass and enabling them to respond to social, moral and ethical issues in the world. Our Catholic curriculum leads our charitable outreach and work for social justice.

[2] NBRIA The Distinctive Curriculum of the Catholic School

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness. See our RSHE Policy.
Other faiths are taught as part of the RE curriculum. See our RE policy. Learning about the religion and cultures of those who do not share the Catholic faith is one of the ways in which Catholic schools embody the call to love one's neighbour. It prepares our children for life in modern Britain, giving them an understanding of the beliefs of others.

Charitable outreach

We aim to foster and develop an awareness of the needs of others: locally, nationally and globally, and promote a spirit of generosity and compassion as taught by Jesus Christ. Through timetabled work on Catholic Social Teaching and Fratelli Tutti pupils are taught to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable.
There are various fundraising events and charitable outreach activities throughout the year coordinated by the Chaplaincy Team and Mini Vinnies:

- Harvest – children are encouraged to bring in food for local foodbanks and the school is a permanent collection point for donations throughout the year.
- At Remembrance, we sell poppies and related merchandise to raise funds for the Royal British Legion.
- In Advent, a charity of the pupils' choosing is supported, as well as collecting gifts for the elderly
- During Lent we raise funds for CAFOD through activities chosen by the pupils – Big Lenten Walk
- We also raise funds for a variety of causes through the year such as MacMillan through cake and biscuit sales and other initiatives.
- Sending Christmas cards to elderly parishioners
- Playing cards and board games with elderly parishioners

Pupils are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in the community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, and an appreciation and respect for others.

Working for Social Justice

Pupils are also taught the importance of standing up for social justice as an important aspect of Christian life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice:

- Celebrating Refuge Week
- Climate change activities e.g. Switch off fortnight
- Supporting Fairtrade Fortnight
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness

Chaplaincy

The spirituality and prayer life of the school are an evident part of its Catholic life and mission. The Prayer and Liturgy policy details the school provision. Chaplaincy provision at St Michael's plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.
Our Chaplaincy Team consists of Mr Gorman and the senior leadership team working with our pupil prayer leaders

Their role is to support each member of the school community to grow in their faith and to be part of the pastoral care system in school. They do this by:

- Maintaining and developing class prayer areas
- Maintaining and developing communal prayer areas
- Writing and leading prayers during whole school acts of worship
- Offering opportunities for informal pupil led prayer during break or lunch times
- Organising retreat days, days of recollection
- Undertaking large projects such as developing and maintaining our prayer garden
- Keeping the pupils updated with information about donations to charity, such as for foodbanks and CAFOD
- Being a role model to others by modelling reverence and joy where applicable
- Writing and leading whole school acts of worship, such as the Remembrance Service
- Accompanying members of the school community, especially in times of need

School Community

St Michael's is a welcoming place for children, families and members of staff from all faiths and none. Recognising that Christ is at the centre of our school we strive to support and value each member, especially the most vulnerable.

Our behaviour policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God's image and likeness. See our Behaviour Policy.

Children and staff are encouraged to engage with a range of awards that recognise the work that we do to implement Catholic Social Teaching. This includes list the awards that your school has taken part in e.g. Livesimply, Eco schools and Faith in Action.

St Michael's recognises that it is part of a family of Catholic schools and works collaboratively with local Catholic schools in clusters, in the Trust and across the diocese. Through our work in RE children learn about the Universal Church and how we belong to a global family.

At St Michael's all are encouraged to live life to the full and reach our full potential. Members of staff have opportunities to take part in the diocesan continuing professional development and formation programme. New teachers are enrolled on the Diocesan Early Careers Programme as part of their induction to teaching in a Catholic school.

Parents

Parents are the first teachers of their children and we work in partnership with them. They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.

Parents are invited to attend a variety of school events throughout the year, which include: class assemblies, curriculum meetings, whole school Masses and liturgical prayers which take place throughout the year both in school and at St Michael's Church and events such as the Christmas Carols.

They are encouraged to participate with their children during Advent when the 'Travelling Cribs' are sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection and also during Lent when the 'Easter Mystery' is sent home. Parents are encouraged to join the PTFA to help organise and host a range of events for our school community. All funds raised support and enhance the provision we offer for our pupils and families.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. St Michael's Catholic Primary School operates an open-door policy.

Parish Links

Links with the local parish are a vital part of Catholic life in school. The parish which serves our school is St Michael's Our parish priest is Fr William.

Children visit the church to look at the different aspects and features of a church. Fr William also supports the teaching of curriculum RE in school by visiting to talk about various topics such as baptism, reconciliation and vocation. Links with the priest are strengthened as he celebrates various services in the school with the children and staff, including Mass and Reconciliation. We support the work of the parish Justice and Peace group through promoting their campaigns and act as a collection point for donations. We also share communications from the parish priest with our school community to encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

The Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

The Coordinator for Catholic life and mission is Charlotte Chapman, Jenny Consterdine and Stephen Gorman.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Catholic life and mission Coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Catholic Life and Mission

- Formulating a written policy for Catholic life and mission
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Catholic life and mission included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that pupils are able to explain the Catholic life and mission of the school, appropriate to their age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds
- Organising themes for outreach, timetable of charitable support, involvement in campaigns
- Developing staff confidence and expertise and enabling them to articulate the mission of the school and its impact on life

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Planning school involvement in national and local projects e.g. the environment
- Use a global planner to ensure relevant days are marked in school e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day,
- Making judgements on outcomes, provision and leadership of Catholic life and mission to inform the ongoing work on the school Catholic Self Evaluation Document

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance of Catholic life and mission in the life of a Catholic school
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Catholic life and mission
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Catholic life and mission
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain/Chaplaincy team
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation on the Catholic life and mission of the school
- Attending appropriate in-service courses e.g. updating Rainbows training, CAFOD CPD, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources and contacts
- Ensuring resources are available to promote the Catholic life and mission of the school e.g. resources for Rainbows, Mini Vinnies, Catholic Social Teaching, Faith in Action
- Budgeting efficiently